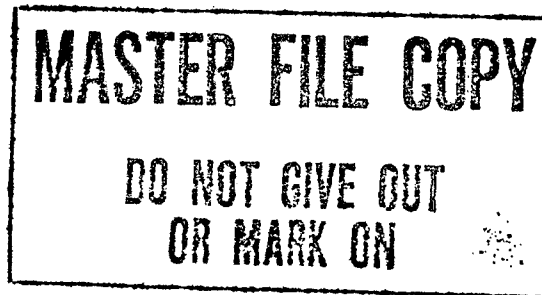




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Focus: North Korea: Responsibility for the Korean Airliner Bombing (U)

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NR Record

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~~NOFORN-NOCONTRACT-~~
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Terrorism Review (U)

11 February 1988

Focus

North Korea: Responsibility for the Korean Airliner Bombing (U)

The North Korean Investigations Department (the overseas intelligence organ of the Korean Workers Party) was probably behind the destruction of Korean Airlines (KAL) Flight 858 on 29 November 1987. Elements of the case carry trademarks of previous North Korean operations, and no evidence has surfaced so far to suggest that any other terrorist group participated in this attack. [REDACTED] (b)(1)

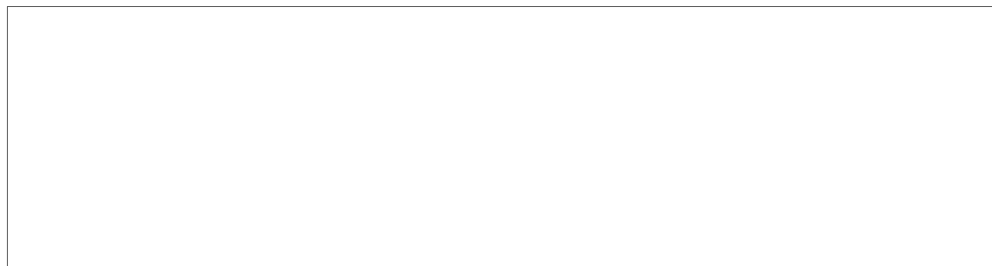
[REDACTED] Kim Hyon-hui (hereafter referred to by her travel alias, Mayumi [REDACTED] (b)(3)
Hachiya) is North Korean and has ties to the Investigations Department. [REDACTED] (b)(3)

Links to North Korean Intelligence

The perpetrators of the bombing are clearly linked to North Korean intelligence. Native-speaking US-Korean language experts who have spoken to Mayumi directly or have heard her voice agree unanimously that she is ethnically North Korean. In her confession to South Korean authorities and in interviews with US officials, Mayumi admitted she has been an Investigations Department agent since 1980. She said she and her accomplice Kim Sung-il (hereafter referred to by his travel alias, Shinichi Hachiya) began to train together as a "father-daughter" team in 1984. [REDACTED]

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Documents in the possession of Shinichi and Mayumi when they were apprehended in Bahrain also tie them to North Korea. These include a notebook containing coded telephone numbers for emergency contacts with North Korean facilities in Europe. US officials have examined photographs of the notebook pages taken before the notebook was given to South Korean authorities. Among the numbers disguised in the notebook, two belong to the North Korean Embassies in Vienna and Belgrade, respectively, according to diplomatic lists and phone books for those cities. 

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Operational Itinerary

We have been able to verify some segments of the circuitous journey that Mayumi says she and her partner took en route to their mission. The following events are based on Mayumi's remarks:

- According to Mayumi, the mission began on 12 November, when she and Shinichi traveled from P'yongyang to Moscow on the inaugural flight of a new North Korean airline route. A press announcement confirmed that the North Korean airline began flying a P'yongyang-to-East Berlin route via Moscow on 12 November.

- The pair rested for a few hours in a facility of the North Korean Embassy in Moscow and then flew on to Budapest, arriving early on 13 November. 

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(b)(3)(b)(1)
(b)(3)

- Mayumi and Shinichi traveled to Belgrade on 23 November. Two North Korean agent handlers delivered the bomb to her and to Shinichi in their room at the Metropol Hotel in Belgrade at approximately 1900 hours on 27 November. 

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 told the US Embassy that Metropol Hotel staff recalled seeing the Hachiyas meet two Oriental men in the lobby.

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- Mayumi and Shinichi smuggled the bomb, disguised as a small clock radio and a bottle of wine, aboard an Air Iraq flight to Baghdad on 28 November. They armed the device in the boarding area of the Baghdad airport and carried it aboard KAL Flight 858. They placed the bomb in the overhead compartment above their seats. Airport security personnel in Baghdad attempted to take the batteries from the radio when the pair boarded but relented when Shinichi protested. The Hachiyas did not have a radio when they were apprehended in Bahrain. A steward who left the flight in Abu Dhabi at about 0300 on 29 November confirmed that the Hachiyas—who also deplaned in Abu Dhabi—had sat in the location where Mayumi said they left the bomb. [redacted] (b)(3)

In addition to the KAL Flight 858 mission, Mayumi stated she has made other trips on behalf of the North Korean Investigations Department. Mayumi said she traveled to Hong Kong and Macao to meet with other North Korean agents in September 1984. Airport and hotel data from Macao verify this claim. [redacted] (b)(3)

Motivation and Modus Operandi

North Korea's frustration over its inability to cohost the 1988 Summer Olympic Games and its desire to portray Seoul as an unsafe venue for the Games probably provided the motive for the bombing of the KAL flight. We believe the bombing had been planned as the first incident of a campaign intended to raise doubts about South Korea's ability to assure the safety of participants and attendees at the Games. [redacted] (b)(3)

The bombing of KAL Flight 858 conforms to previous North Korean actions in its disregard for innocent life and willingness to flout the norms of international behavior. Among such acts undertaken by North Korea during the last two decades are:

- An abortive commando attack on South Korea's presidential mansion in 1968.
- An unsuccessful assassination attempt in 1974 on the then President of South Korea, Pak Chong-hui, that resulted in the death of Pak's wife.
- The kidnappings of Japanese and Chinese women from Japan and Macao in the summer of 1978.
- An unsuccessful assassination attempt against South Korean President Chon Tu-hwan in Rangoon, Burma, in October 1983 that killed 18 South Korean and Burmese citizens and wounded scores of others. [redacted] (b)(3)

The attempt by Mayumi and Shinichi to kill themselves while being questioned in Bahrain fits the known modus operandi of North Korean intelligence operatives. [redacted] (b)(1)
[redacted] cyanide capsules are routinely issued to agents to use [redacted] (b)(3)
to avoid interrogation in case of capture. Such capsules were found in the possession of North Korean commandos arrested in Rangoon after the bombing there in 1983. Only quick action and overwhelming force on the part of Bahraini

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security personnel prevented Mayumi's death. Chemical analysis of the cyanide capsule seized from Mayumi and traces of cyanide found in the esophagus and lungs of Shinichi's corpse show a chemical composition identical to capsules found on North Korean agents captured or killed in earlier incidents, including:

- An agent apprehended in Taegu, South Korea, in April 1983.
- An agent apprehended infiltrating South Korea in February 1985.

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Outlook

If the bombing of KAL Flight 858 is the opening round in a campaign against the Seoul Olympics, P'yongyang will probably conduct other attacks against South Korean interests. The public exposure and condemnation of the North—as well as South Korean security precautions—may serve as deterrents, however.

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